Poets only play with words, you know; they too are masters of the Lie, the Grand Fiction.

Poets and men like me who fight for something contained in words, but not words.

Gwendolyn MacEwen

Special thanks to
Joan Chandler, Tim Doherty, Catherine Evans, Marko Pecinovic and Michael Preston

Table of Contents

Amanda McAleer, Invocation of Atlas... 4
Robert Hackett, Labouvie's New Catalogue... 5
Michelle MacAleese, I am the Mighty... 5
Frank Willdig, Icarus... 6
Emily Bennett, Fairy Tale Revisited... 7
Michael Preston, Birth of the Shack-Man... 7
Rebecca King, English Major... 9
Rose Morton, The Park at Dusk... 10
Frank Willdig, The Anniversary... 11
Sarah Dowling, Untitled... 11
Chris Bird, Upon Being in Class... 12
Nancy Morin, Crushed... 12
Amanda McCov, Sad One... 13
David Fortier, Alone Again... 13
Jessica Van Horssen, PK... 14
Jenn Kang, Elemental... 14
Molinda McLeod, Untitled... 16
Stacey Moore, The Awakening... 17
Kim Misner, Portrait of an Elderly Man... 17
Margarita Bizina, Scattered Thoughts... 19
Karolina Figurski, Untitled... 19
Michael Preston, Sanity Exercises... 20
Stacey Moore, This is Me... 20
Stephen Campbell, Cerebral Real Estate... 21
Tanya Bellehumeur-Allait, Frosting... 22
Michelle MacAleese, Untitled... 23
Nancy Morin, Strangers in the Night... 23
Karolina Figurski, In Times of Absence... 24
Stacey Moore, Angel Dust... 24
David Fortier, Within... 25
Wei Caticart, Dreams... 25
Stephen Campbell, Endless Summer... 26

Anonymous, Tour Bus... 26
Amanda McCoy, Hideout... 28
Chris Bird, Untitled... 30
Chris Bird, Youths, Thanks to... 31
Chris Bird, The habitual Drinkers... 31
Priya Raju, Carnival... 33
Margarita Bizina, The Date WWII Began... 34
Molly MacDonald, And Day Begins... 35
Amanda McAleer, Disillusionment... 36
Emily Evans, Turkish Rug... 37
Amanda McCoy, An Ode to my Shelter... 38
Chris Bird, Drinking Gin... 38
Rose Morton, Late One Sunday... 39
Emily Bennett, A Pretend Secret... 41
Jessica Van Horssen, A Barefoot Morning... 41
Sarah Dowling, Creation Story... 42
Sarah Dowling, The Swan Pond... 43
Sarah Dowling, Creation Story 2... 43
Amanda McCoy, Canadian Gothic... 44
Frank Willdig, Home... 45
Priya Raju, in transit... 45
Jenn Kang, On The Shore of Lake Ontario... 46
Emily Evans, 4 a.m. Patient... 46
Stephen Campbell, Lines Composed... 47
Curtis Mullin, Wherever... 48
Priya Raju, The Bookers... 49
Jessica Van Horssen, Staring... 49
Rose Morton, The Yellow Wallpaper... 50
Sarah Dowling, Untitled... 50
Nancy Morin, Frank Gehry Cuggenheim... 51
Emily Evans, Debriefed... 51
Robert Hackett, Les Dessinateurs de L'air... 52

Illustrations

Marko Pecinovic, Pygmy Twilight... Cover
Marko Pecinovic, Purple Sailor... 4
Jen Smith, Plaster #1... 8
Marko Pecinovic, Embracing Self... 10
Curtis Mullin, The Hand... 15
Heather Young, Shinteki Kondo... 18
Marko Pecinovic, La Tristesse de Zeus... 22
Curtis Mullin, The Face... 27

Marko Pecinovic, Moroccan Majesty... 32
Marko Pecinovic, Dementia... 34
Curtis Mullin, Smoke... 40
Marko Pecinovic, Gnome 1... 45
Marko Pecinovic, Gnome 2... 46
Marko Pecinovic, Gnome 3... 47
Marko Pecinovic, Reaching... 52

Editor

Emily Evans
Invocation of Atlas

Wisdom, courage, grace,
Modern woman’s race.
Not fashion’s taste.
Unfeminine, not fit,
What a bitch, such a waste.
A mind behind a face.

Leather, velvet, lace,
Oh so sweet.
You wanna taste.
Toothache.
Heart break.

Pace race.
Gotta love a lady.

We choke on our yoke.

Labauvie’s New Catalogue

How the intricacies
of your line
sing in the air
in friendly curve
and cadence,
how they show the
most usual form
in warm and happy rhyme,
yet in essence truest
such that all is re-
dis- or un-
covered:
Moon Wine
and Minnie’s
Lost Slipper as
Saturn’s Last Ring
to River Mouth
and Fish are Jumpin’
and everything
down to the last point
is twirled
and smiled at
in its serious place.
‘Mid star and wind.

Amanda McAleer

I am the Mighty Loyal Midget

In an endless row of babies.
I interlope, loving it
And looking forward to the only consolation:
Circumstantial consummation.
A silent conversation in endless cribs
With loving liars, bent on hysterical procreation.
And the only conclusion:
Keep waiting.
My too fearful flesh is finally broken.
I have been seduced and I have been destroyed.
I hope only for consistent deception
But I remain the Mighty Loyal Midget.

Michelle MacAleese

Robert Hackett
Icarus

i
A strange, delicate thread, this earth,
That sets our course to die from birth,
A place where man must come of age
The moment that he takes the stage.
The moment when his son is born
Is when the father’s youth is worn
And tender care becomes his plan,
For in the child must grow the man.

ii
I framed and waxed with thoughtful care
While in my maze with no one there;
He dreamed upon my promises,
Weightless, serene, above all this;
With greatest skill I curved our wings
And told him tales of wondrous things
That dwelling beyond the labyrinth walls
Where the tyrant gloats and victim crawls,
I saw his eyes reflect my words,
He saw the two of us as birds,
Radiant, as we cast our lot,
His face still breaks my sleep with thought.

iii
Past the harbors in sheltered bays,
Above the ploughman’s startled gaze,
The shepherd and the fisherman
Are chained to earth when day is done
But we defied the tyrant’s law,
Through science saw what no man saw.

iv
There! I see white legs in that pond,
A final splash and dark beyond,
With dimming eyes I see it still
As aging fathers always will,
I gave him wings to set him free,
His only fault was trust in me.

Frank Willdig

Fairy Tale Revisited

I reach out to the sky and sigh
Star light, star bright...
Let me sleep beside the gentle moon tonight,
Cuddle up with the wind
And spoon the stars
That burst alive like fireflies in flight.
I caress them with the touch of a timid woman-child
And off and
Off they go,
Like silly brats you can’t help but love.
A humpty dumpty fragile state,
As constant as a rhyme
Like that in all the...
I thought you’d always reappear,
Turn my back on your loving eyes
Knock, knock....
Who’s there?
Sweet justice at my door,
And now there’s clarity
through the looking glass;
Ate a mushroom of regret
And a wild berry of longing.
Hey, toss it all up!
Star light, star bright...
Please let me quench this appetite.

Emily Bennett

Birth of the Shack-Man Tonic

Seven dead lies
Thaw’s-
Israel
Dracula Spy kiss
Deception -has-
Gone
Jelly Belly Night Marchers
-dare to- Darn that dream
Is anybody here that loves my Jesus?
Think Bubblehouse Boplicity
Rouge tonic moondreams
Rise up lifeblood
Shacklin’ nights -feeding- invocation
Godchild Venus de Milo
Your Lady.

Michael Preston
Talking to his mythical creation
he’s thinking thoughts in reverse
depraved images
scourged into the make
carries a message and casts it down upon an ancient throne
himself above well thinking
he negates his audience and soars where they can’t see him.
blue note book records in scrawling writing
personalized pronoun pens
lost his thought in the city where the scuba-divers drown in
Latin-phrase-words
beat upon the desk
tapped, ratta-tat, tapped
to the separate round of night
little James Joyce
of all time conjectured incoherently.
missing nothing, reveals again, the aim is heightened by
the reality of a situation
its opposition-association to those who didn’t catch it
he establishes a moment, scrounging for a thought
above gravity and beauty and where this line co-joins
and they forgot all about the revolution until he sang that song
and then forgot again.
impatiently he’s told his theorized amend
his flickered focus - missing only this:
and there, where angels lose their way
his mystified existence.
Rebecca King
The Park at Dusk

In the ebb of an August day, we recede, despite pearls, and drift in high heels toward the park. Slowly, the warm smell of summer wafts lazily to, in, over me. Like a layer of downy fuzz wrapping me up. Like my father used to when he'd whisper “snug as a bug”. Placed tightly between layers of feathers, cotton, and squishy foam rubber like one special penny placed in the pocket of a small child for safe keeping. Silk, boas, flannel-sweet wine and warm milk all mixed in one.

Rose Morton

The Anniversary

Just off the highway
the fields and the hedges begin.
We wrapped ourselves in
a blanket of silence
and followed the flickering moonlight
through yellow basswood leaves.

We held hands and felt
the first bite of snow,
and you remembered
those footsteps years ago
and how they followed us through the snow
and found no fault in dying young.

Frank Willdig

Untitled

We drove off the highway onto this little dirt road. Just a little ways off the highway, not one hundred yards, and leading to some little farm. Grid, they call it, or corduroy, with gophers that’ll pop up right in the middle, under your tires, almost. No point in swerving cause there’s nowhere to swerve to. We all get out together, pat the dog too young to know to growl at strangers. The sun is setting, dipping low into the valley. A round ball trapped between the hills, setting its yellowy flame on the dead grass and lighting everything on fire. We’re a little worried, because you never know with these farmers, so all three of us are trying not to get to the door first, but for the girl, there’s no expectation to knock. The wife, about seventy just like her blue dress, weathered like her white house, her brown-red barn, her farm and Bill. “Bill’s outside in the kennels. You go ahead. You go ahead and talk to Bill.” Bill and his malamutes and huskies, barking in their kennels, the sun setting their eyes on fire. Bill and his blue-eyed dogs. Sleeping on Bill’s property that night, under a dark quilt flecked with glass, enveloped by the night music of coyotes and their children, a lonely tenor suddenly clefts the cooled earth with his slow, ululating dirge. Bill’s malamutes crescendo, their song swells and the coyotes answer in syncopated sympathy.

Sarah Dowling
Upon being in class, staring at a duo chromatic chalkboard; and upon sitting in an uncomfortable chair, wishing I had a smoke, and doodling descriptive poems in the margin of my notebook

Chalkboard
black and white
as the night
i stumbled home
drunk
in the snow
Chair
cradling my bottom
as a granite ledge
cradles a perched gargoyle
Fingers
tapping impatiently
nicotine-jaundiced
like an old gym shirt
stained under the armpits

Chalkboard
black and white
as the night
I stumbled home
drunk
in the snow
Chair
cradling my bottom
as a granite ledge
cradles a perched gargoyle
Fingers
tapping impatiently
nicotine-jaundiced
like an old gym shirt
stained under the armpits

 Crushed
My heart beats like 80's electronica
With an absent bass.
You give me goosebumps
That won't go away
A mouth full of cotton swabs.
Butterflies feel more like vultures
Beating their wings in my stomach
Waiting to pick at the pieces.
I'm drunk and hungover all at once,
Cry and laugh in one exhalation
And
Watch you walk by
Confidently smiling the whole time.

Sad One
You chased me on your bike down the street:
I'm sorry, didn't mean for that to happen and
(we're not in High School) wouldn't you
like to go out sometime?
And so we did.

Coffee and the Monument and bad, cheap movies and
nightwalks and finally, to bed.
Then, later, pad thai at Nantha's
Photos and dusty bookstores and
running through rain (giggly-drunk) to the subway.

And we talked, we talked, we talked.
Sometimes I just listened.

Then one day, you forgot to pack or
I had rehearsal or work maybe
neither of us had time money energy.
Your eyes and the perfect symmetry of your face
Stopped surprising me.
You no longer watched me get dressed.

I tried not to hurt you, I wept when I did,
But I was, after all, under your skin
and could only tear my way back out.
That's all you can recall.

I suppose it time you chased me
back up the street.

Alone again
Or at last
It is painful
Or purifying
My soul aches
Or breathes
There is a hole
Or room for improvement
Will it never end
Or is this a beginning
On a twisted journey
Or is this normal
Alone again
Or at last

David Fortier
P.R.
I wish she would tell me these
things
these truths of her
and the world
that tumble and churn inside us both
winding their way out
by candlelight
and twisting impatience.
The dark shadow that passes
through
the face of a woman
sleeping beauty,
and the tragedy that
strengthens the arch of her
back and brow
slip, as we open our laughter
to the molten purple sky
while remembering what trees looked like and the
sound of breaking.
I see her
scratching her forehead
with the hand of a
wise artist
awed at the wonder of rain.
Jessica Van Horssen

Elemental
Neon darkness with maniac blinking
Violent lines etched painfully on brain.
Ceaseless eye-blinding glow of eternity
Living forever without black glow of light.
Jenn Kang
phone rings - 9am
no music
pass me the pianist
play anything
hair and makeup for four follows
spray, 3-pronged lashes, glue, dried-flowers, pipe-cleaners and silver bells
back at home
a cool, crisp chardonnay blends with ambient jazz
stinky cheese
swirls like steam from a teapot amongst
tulle, time and tissues
a quick fag in between to calm the nerves
guests begin to arrive
not guests really, more just
family and friends
humming and floating around like busy little bees
I remember that intense tightness
wound up like a spinning top
held in limbo
car arrives
Dan’s driving
1957 charcoal grey English Rover
scarlet red interior
doors that open from front to back
we parked for a while
not far away
chatted – about what I don’t remember
look at the time!
butterflies returned and began to dance like microwave popcorn
as we pulled up
and
guided by a friendly hand
I stepped one foot
and then another
into a new life

Molinda McIlford

The Awakening

The calming sound of your sweet voice
carries through the breeze,
and when I thought I stood alone,
you were there among the darkened trees.

With the help of your enduring love
I have changed, and even grown.
And I feel as long as I have you,
I won’t ever be alone.

Though I may never be the rose you deserve,
and only petals in the wind,
I hope and pray you won’t over look
the love that may be found within.

Stacey Moore

Portrait of an Elderly Man

The chair he sits upon
Day after day after day,
Faces the window
Where he gazes out to the sandy shore.
Rocking back and forth,
Never changing his stare.
He never sleeps, hardly eats.
As he never speaks,
We don’t know what he is thinking,
Sometimes a beautiful bird
Will sit on the window
And sing for him.
The sides of his mouth
Creep upwards into an awkward smile.
His eyes light up
As if seeing this for the first time;
Then in an instant
His thoughtless expression returns,
His eyes oblivious,
Until the next songbird sings.

Kim Misner
Scattered Thoughts

I wanted to tell you just how much... words with no meaning, meaning no words... You see, the thought goes so fast that to put it down on paper is a torture. It’s 2:25 at night, funny, for you it’s the day... How did it happen? Why did the distance make it painfully clear? or maybe we are better off blindfolded... I opened my eyes to your hazel ones and saw you in a new light, oh well, does it really matter if it was twilight? Twilight... taste this word... It leads to lies, deceit I keep a picture of you... Why would you even care? Bitter smile... Yes, my bitter smile is my trademark these days For all I want to say... It’s too late. You’re gone, not willing to hear. You know, you always knew, right? Well, I guess I should finally say it. I... Yes I got your message... love... I hope you’re happy now... you.

Margarita Bizina

Untitled

A brilliant eternal flash seemingly teasing my faltering sight A brilliant door lights my eyes The center-an embryo of my failing gift or unworldly revelation.

Karolina Figarski
Sanity Exercise
Sweltering highway
Ascending highness
Carrying soul cargo
Absorbed in line
Lifeless dreamers
Trusting judgement
Maddening silence
Resolved by tar
Counting backwards
Forgotten pattern
Conditioned to escape
Nothing left
Rising light
Breaks trance
Yearning for sound
Returning to spell
Energy penetrates
Earth grounds me
Back to the line.

Michael Preston

So, this is me
moody, secretive, bitter, fearful,
sometimes sweet and sometimes tearful,
lost in a world where all is wrong,
ever weak, but much too strong.
so here I am, this is me,
but is this who I am supposed to be?
lost in a world where all is wrong,
am I right to be too strong?
is it okay to have feelings suppressed,
am I allowed to be slightly depressed?
questions for you my dear sweet friend,
and here I am – lost again.

Stacey Moore

Cerebral Real Estate
In the window of imagination
Appears her face
With faded smile
And moot laughter.
Feelings of longing.
No longer felt.
Nothing sensed,
In heart's fleeting
Memory.
Days gone by;
Of feelings shared.
And thoughts of
Reconciliation.
Half imagined.
Shall she always stand?
As the many encounters
Of our previous times.
As the years have faded
Into subjects themselves,
She becomes more
Than she ever had been.
For yesterday is lost,
Today is already past,
Shall tomorrow ever come
For we are no more.
The memory ghosts,
Haunting and taunting
The images of the brain,
Forever changing
And becoming jaded.
When green could be blue
And her name the same,
Attitudes forgotten in
The extinguished flame.

Stephen Campbell
Feasting
Smooth leather
under coarse, broken skin
of my soles.
On my calloused finger
pushed over a greasy fingernail,
a ring of gold.
Sagging shoulders
under the shimmery softness
of a fine weave,
straighten.
At your table
my place is chosen
honored
my feet swing.
My cup, golden,
catches the light.
Soaking in your easy wine
my lips are feasting.
As we are dancing
our bodies full of music
and down my temples
behind my ears
warm oil trickles
to the small of my back.
Beloved, in your house
I am home.
_Tanya Bellehumeur-Allatt_

Untitled
A man bounces forever in his memory
on the surface of his history's lake
and fishing not, nor tailing the wind
he bounces on the surface of all he has been,
until the man sinks to the bottom of time
past the edge of his memory's depth.
He falls into nowhere, and nowhere is here,
he is nothing, is static, forgetting in fear.
Forgotten pain bruises the deep night dreams
and I sing despite the good-byes, the nail-biting and the lonely metro.
When the road ends it leaves an awesome
absence, full and clear.
And I am left to touch the sky with designs
conceived alone, and the precious confusion
somewhere between the dreams of night
and those of day.
_Michelle MacAleese_

Strangers in the Night
The night air chills, stars reflecting off a dark mirror.
We huddle for warmth.
Ancient trees bordering the lake become shadowed strangers
Strange because I feel closer to them than I do to you.
Discuss.
Philosophy, theology, politics, everything
and nothing all at once.
Trying to prevent silence from thickening the air.
Molasses in March regardless.
Anxiety crawls like a spider on my skin.
Taste your moist breath giving me mouth to mouth
From a distance
Yet
Suffocate alone in the darkness.
_Nancy Morin_
In Times of Absence

When images
Are tousled
In a
Kaleidoscope
of emblazoned
Gems
To be
Twisted into
Mosaics of
Indifferent schemes
Set apart
By a mimicking hand
A scattering of vision
A shattering of gems
Creating blind fervor
And brilliant flashes
Of the
Nameless and precious

Angel Dust

Although you grew your angel wings,
and floated up into the sky,
throughout my world, my life, and my heart,
your presence will never die.
The only one that could understand
why I loved you so,
was the one I found inside of you,
the one I can’t let go.
I think someday we may meet again,
and this lonely time will pass,
the echoed silences will disappear,
and our time together will last.
I hope you were looking down,
while floating up into the sky,
because until I make that same journey,
it was our last good-bye.
And although you grew your angel wings,
I will hold memories of you in my heart,
and in that sense, this love will grow,
and we won’t ever be apart.

Stacey Moore

Within

Locked within the cavernous corridors of my mind
Lies the answer to questions still left unasked
Clues to the mystery of existence and beyond
Blueprints to our eternal essence
Kept within the majestic chambers of my heart
Are the secrets of sexuality
The source of dreams and prayer
The pain and pleasure of love
Entangled within the extravagant edifice of my groin
The need and seed to create another world is carried
A greater selfless purpose is kindled
The utter simplicity of complications
Guarded by the beast within the depths of my soul
Lies the compass of destiny
These tools within
I am prepared to navigate my
Voyage through eternity.

David Fortier

Dreams

I am a white rabbit and a shit load of drugs
I am Vaseline on a camera lense
I am smoke and flashing lights
I am Jimmy Stewarts’s flying head
I am detached speech filled with clues
“There’s no place like home” she says
While clicking her heels.
It must be a bad dream. Who would want
To go back to Kansas?

Wes Cathcart
Endless Summer

It was late August or early September when I first heard of your arrival... I think it was anyway... I can’t really remember, because my summer vacation never ended from the year prior to your messy birth... It was still the summer for me that cold December night, down by my thinking spot, in the front seat of my beat-up Honda where you were conceived... So too, those days after Valentine’s when your mother threw me out and called me an asshole... It was July when I chose to move on and sentence myself to a lifetime of your hatred... and my own regret. My lawyer protected me in those waning summer days... I got to know him before I even knew you existed... It was a week or so after you were born that she let me see you... you sucked on my bicep thinking it was her breast... It was still summer for me, when I dressed in a suit and walked down that aisle to hear her say that she didn’t care if I saw you... I chose not to during that endless summer... it was your first summer, but my last summer as a child... I don’t see myself in you, just a beautiful child, that I may never know.

Stephen Campbell

Tour Bus

Standing alone in the spotlight, it gives you a headache you forget your lines and compensate with sexual antics someone in the audience belches from boredom, it smells like teen spirit, and that makes you hungry you have not eaten since the glass of powdered milk you had yesterday. It is Tuesday and you are already having a bad year. You want sex but your hand is asleep. Your ultimate goal is world domination but you can’t open the tooth paste. Somehow you know that someone was hit by the Allman brothers tour bus and you are jealous. You are the Zen master of female castration and you wonder why you can’t get a date. But it all boils down to this “the sun will rise tomorrow and if it doesn’t it will be awful dark.”

Anonymous
Hideout

Sometimes when things get crazy, I wish I could hide somewhere. Just have a place where no one would ever look for me. Do you have a place like that? I did, once. That was before Aunt Pauline died. Her death was a confusion, disturbing but not painful. But the loss of my hideout...

There was this little cottage we used to go to in the summer. It wasn’t a real cottage, just a couple of camping trailers parked on a huge wooded lot. It belonged to my father’s aunt – that’s Pauline – and her boyfriend Phil. She was a brown old raisin, always sitting out in her plaid sun hat while she smoked cigarette after cigarette. She scared me, but I had lots of hiding places where she’d never find me. The cottage was far away in Bethany, and it had trees to climb, and bird’s nests, and dried-up mushrooms that made smoke when you stepped on them. The days we drove up there were the best ones in the summer.

I’m sandwiched between my brothers in the back seat. The road out the window looks wet, but the puddles keep disappearing. All our windows are down and sometimes a bee comes in. I could be stung. It’s an adventure. Dad’s got a tape in radio. It’s the same one every time we go. Going to the chapel and we’re... gonna get married... when we get there, I jump out. “We need help unloading this stuff, honey”. I’m already gone. It’s hot. The trees are buzzing. I check on my flower garden, remembering names. Sweet Williams, Marigolds, Bachelor’s Buttons. Then onto the patch where I pull a carrot out of the dirt and eat it right away. I go through the half-moon of wild roses Dad dug up in some field and planted in the yard. I always smell each one. I like the symmetry. I want to know if they all smell exactly the same. I can hear Pauline laugh as she tells my father in French that I’m like a bumblebee. It embarrasses me.

I go into the trees where they can’t see me anymore. It’s cooler here, and I like the pattern on the ground. I see a cedar in the woods. It looks funny here, because in the city cedars are so small and neat, and this one’s all bushy. I peek through the branches and see long grass on the other side. I crawl through, and stand up on a little circular patch of grass. I’m surrounded by trees on all sides, all the way up to the sky. Only I know this place. Maybe I can go get my sleeping bag and more carrots and just hide here forever. How long will they look for me? Will anyone cry if I never come back?

I feel such a thrill in this little clearing. Secrets take place here at night. I never decide exactly what – it’s too scary to think. But big animals must come here, and owls in the trees, and they don’t make any noise at all. After I find this round little patch of grass, I keep coming back to hide. I read books here. My stomach gets wet from the dirt. My brothers look for me, but they never find me. I leave some of my flowers for the night animals, and sometimes little pieces of bread, just to see if they’re there when I come back.

Then one day, I’m coming out of the woods and Dad’s talking to a strange man. His eyes are all red. I’ve never seen him look like this, I’m scared. Mom takes me inside the trailer and gives me a glass of Kool-aid. “Honey, Aunt Pauline had a heart attack today. She was very old...” There’s a lump in my stomach. I was hiding in the woods and Pauline got sick and she didn’t get to see me again... smelling flowers the way she liked. But I feel even worse for never liking her, for thinking she smelled bad, for noticing the hairs above her lip. I know about God and I think I’m in big trouble. I go to the funeral and watch everybody crying, but I can’t. Nobody’s ever died before. I’m not sure how I’m supposed to act. But mostly I want to go back into the woods, and I can’t. I feel responsible somehow, as though hiding brought on her heart attack. A couple of months later, Phil dies too, and everyone says it’s because his heart was broken.

That was when Dad didn’t want to go to the cottage anymore. I wanted so much to ask if we could go back, but every time that lump would be in my stomach. It didn’t seem right that my special place could exist without me. I found other trees to climb and we eventually moved near a graveyard, where there were lots of places to explore. But somehow nothing was ever as good as my secret hideout in the woods. I grew taller, read book after book, but the lingering desire for solitude remained.

I never went back. Dad sold the land to a mink farmer, he cut the woods down and put up a long skinny barn. I tried telling my parents about the clearing once, but they just laughed. “Maybe old Pauline and Phil are haunting it”. I don’t think so. Sometimes I dream about it, and there’s only one person there – a little girl eating dirty carrots and reading a book.

Amanda McCoy
**Untitled**

this is grandma's apple pie
mass-produced and shipped in freezer trucks
directly to your local supermarket
this is a big fucking luxury suv
with traction control
and six-way electric leather seats
that guzzles gas
like a frat boy shotguns beer
This is the grueling hike to the summit of mt. washington
only to be greeted by a parking lot full of cars
and a jungle of concession stands
this is the statue of liberty
wearing camouflage fatigues
holding a nine-finger to your head
this is the elimination of the middle class
this is john cougar mellancamp
pretending he's still blue-collar
even though it's been a long time
since he actually believed that dancing was everything
this is the most powerful man in the world
under threat of impeachment because he got a hummer
in the oval office
this is america

*Chris Bird*

---

**Youth, thanks to Joseph Conrad**

Youth is something that, paradoxically, crosses the generations
Youth is the quest for the ideal in life
the great illusion is that life will actually give you something ideal
Youth is reckless
walking on hot coals, searching for the fire
Youth is optimism
an unbreakable belief that everything will work out
Youth is romance
investing in everything with a kind of eccentric glamour
Youth is sailing in a ship that is long past its best days
Youth is heroic
life is an adventure rather than an ordeal
Youth is dangerous
Youth lets the safety lights go out
Youth sins against the harmony of the universe
Youth is silly
but charming
and beautiful

*Chris Bird*

---

**The habitual drinkers**

these are hollow men
having nothing within and nothing without
they are collectively alone
as they sit and pickle themselves

*Chris Bird*
Carnival

The ghosts of dead helicopters
haunt tear gas
smothering a historic city
(always lovely this time of year)
beauty and purpose trampled
by sirens and songs
prayers and drums
metal on metal
and feet pounding on stained asphalt

Still
little old ladies hoisting signs
and children wearing their carnival masks
dance into a corner,
where grim (nervous) uniforms
and a chain-link joke
stifle chants, breath and perspective
in the horrible tasteable silence
(just pray that neither side breaks, now
'cause you know what they'll tell you this was).

Barrage of sound and fury
clenches down
into the fine white heat
of deafening eyes

(ListEN TO ME
LISTEN TO ME
LISTEN TO ME)

reflected mutely in ranks of shields and shining helmets.

Priya Raju
The date WW II began

Wicked smile
pouring rain
taxi driver is asking my name

Hurry up
to escape
from the cigarette smoke

To the freshness of sweet
Well, so what that it's wet?
so what that it's dark?

Street lamps show me the way
to avoid every trap
How ironic!

Nature remembers this day
crying just like the people
sensing their pain

I glance over my shoulder
at the business bar

What has happened
to the usually cheerful crowd?

They remember
me too,
every soul in this world

And the drinks
suddenly
are so cold

Like the raindrops
rolling down my neck

I shiver,
I ponder,
I speed up my step

The thought never leaves
my inquiring mind

Nature remembers
the day it began

Margarita Bizina

And Day Begins

Voices, singing fresh the wet morning
dew-licked pastures are stirring for the sunrise salute.

As the last forms of darkness
slink now to the sidelines
daybreak rings triumph over the deafness of sleep.

And inside the chamber
a woman rolls over
shocked from her linen by a digital beep.

The curtain still drawn
she glides to the mirror
flicks on the light switch and shows her distaste.

Blinded by looking,
she picks up her war paint
smears on an image and ruins the face.

And outside the chamber
the world has erupted
washed pure with colours, the brush of the sun.

The autumn's a circus of sumptuous splendor
clashing with crimsons and rouges of light.

Yet when she emerges
perverted sensations
all she can think is “How tacky!”

Molly MacDonald

Dementia by Marko Pecinovic
Disillusionment

Could it be? In this age of hedonism, nihilism, and postmodern pessimism, where we can only moan quietly into the darkness – a miracle? Not just Christ’s mug found in mud, or the Madonna’s visage in a rust stain – delusions dreamt by faith famined souls – but an honest to You-Know-Who miracle? I had to see this.

Dancing in the streets, they seemed your typical new age Jesus freaks. With the full gamete of hallelujahs and shivering seizures of the holy spirit, spliced with some kumbiyah guitar singing amidst it all. How sarcastically I would depict it all to my equally skeptical friends while sipping black double espressos, food for the disillusioned soul. Yet, how beautiful they looked with their flashing colors, singing with all emphasis from their soul, body and spirit enlivened into an ecstasy seen in each face – and who can but wonder of what such wonders their illusions convinced them of? Who, upon seeing tears glistening in their eyes as their comrades carefully bring them back from a fulfillment never before known can but yearn for disillusionment of disillusionment?

Then the crowd split, like the Red Sea before Moses, to reveal the girl. A girl! Hardly grown into her training bra, but without the awkwardness of fumbling adolescence, with an air of confidence I had seen in few women. Knowing from rumor what would happen next, and seeing her being lifted onto a cross, no faith kept me from trying to prevent what the modern world calls madness and these lunatics call religion. But the crowd kept me back, and she stretched out her arms willingly to the cross, an eager Christ for the nails to be driven in. The dancers went into a fever. The hammers struck as I cried “No!”, drowned out by the hymns, her screams, and the crowd’s jubilation. Water to wine. Beautiful girl into crucified martyr, either way it pours red upon the thirsty faithful. No sooner were the nails driven through then the men who had buried them in her flesh tore them free. Still held back by the crowd, I wondered if I would watch her bleed to death before me. This was not what I had wanted, this was no subject of sarcastic chuckling at the silliness of belief, followed by statements that we are all oh-so-sane. My own mockery sickened, withered within me, and was washed away by her blood that gushed down upon the pedestal they had erected her cross upon. She still upheld her hands, the flow of the blood raining...now...now trickling...now dripping as flesh rewove, and my knees gave way. She showed to all her unmarked hands smeared with blood, and cried, “In this world, there is much too much bleedin’ and not enough healin’!” To an exuberant cry of Hallelujahs that almost drowned her out, and me amongst the voices.

Emily Evans

Turkish Rug

Two weeks ago, my cat carried a dead pigeon into the cement courtyard of our apartment block. The block is a hollow square, and the courtyard is filled with beerbottles, cigarettebutts, and chickenbones. The bird was decapitated, and my cat had placed it outside the livingroom window, keeping it within her adhesive gaze. It’s possible that she just found the pigeon there, and it had actually bludgeoned its own head off flying into windows. I don’t know much about that pigeon, other than the cat developed an unhealthy affection for it. I told the super on many occasions that I didn’t think that it was my responsibility to remove the pigeon carcass. Finally I did submit, picked it up with a camouflage green garbagebag, and disposed of it neatly outside the block, in the dumpster in the alley adjacent to rue St. Marc.

The dumpster is accessible from the courtyard via a dank tunnel which runs through the basement. There are two steel doors at each end of the tunnel. It took me about three months to discover this mystery dump, and my fellow apartment block tenants were mighty pleased when I did find it and took it upon myself to remove the thirty-seven garbage bag pile-up from the fire escape outside of my ground-level threeandahalf.

So I am sure that you can imagine my qualmishness, (both from her septic stench and screwy garbled look) when this morning, my cat strolled in through the living-room window carrying the decomposing headless carcass of that once pigeon two weeks after its initial appearance. Her head high, her jaw wide and fixed around that frothing pigeon belly. At first, I couldn’t tell if it was pride or devilry.

Then she walked over to my paprika primrose paledpurple four-by-six Yajabadir and dropped that gan-grened carcass, a cavity on the rug’s intricate weave.

Emily Evans
Ode to my Shelter and to my Companion
and to all his Trashy Books

It’s not the lion’s den.
You didn’t bring the walls down.
You’re not a ninja spy warrior
Or even Charles Atlas-
Although there is some resemblance, I must confess.
But you built Bohemia
And filled it with food and books and a silver hubcap
And I hide there from the world.
And when you make pasta and carve pumpkins
And leave your math books on every flat surface
And we make fun of Rex Murphy -
You looking in from the balcony,
It feels even more like home.
Can a ninja spy warrior do that?
You get to be the hero in the story of your own life.

Amanda McCoy

drinking gin out of a dirty coffee mug

a smoke bent up like a wrecked car
hanging off chapped lips.
thinking about shit that should be committed to paper
but won’t be
because shit is foggy like london
and impossible to focus on for too long
trying to fill an empty space with booze and nicotine
and still not being satisfied after fourteen doubles
and fifty-two smokes
stepping out the door at four in the morning to clear the head
but fresh air clarifies thoughts about as well as another drink will
which is going to be poured anyway.

Chris Bird

Late One Sunday Afternoon

I am tired of this cluttered room
Of offices, newspapers
Of sickly, dusty, indoor plants
Yesterday,
It was a warm afternoon
We were sitting, laughing, under a lilac tree
On such a day
One is struck
By the murky darkness that awaits inside
Pale light filtering through stained curtains
Standing in the middle of small, untidy rooms
That smell like sour milk, sweat, stale sex

The sun was hot
But the ground was damp
And we sat for a while before
diffusing to our lives
I feel like crying
For everyone who has known the happiness
Of lilacs on a lazy spring afternoon
And had it taken away

Rose Morton
A Pretend Secret

On goes this transparent charade
Reality is suspended
I dare you to call me on this bluff:

We’re driving through invisible space,
Those road trips that make my eyes burn,
And thoughts now bleed into the sun;
Tattoo us together with a tan;
The white flesh is the root
of where you will always be
I read your face in the dark
And you turn in me with every waking page
I’ll roll into you with a lapping wave.

Mask my words and breath in my thoughts,
What a fine hallucination,
This medley of soul-stained spots.
It’s truth encaged,
Like Galileo,
Waiting the inevitable glory day.

Emily Bennett

A Barefoot Morning (Interrupted)

The mist swirls behind my eyes
as the grass sweats into my blue jeans
with its effort to open the day.
I like it and smile.
Sauntering across the street
he soon drowns out the screeching
testament of grasshoppers.
I’ve heard of his love.
His mother, the Father, apple pie
fried chicken, impish women and dirty rye
so he shows me the Elvis sticker
he tenderly glued to his wallet.
I laugh and touch it for good luck
as we tease the melodrama of poetry
and before he leaves,
I make him take off his shoes
and I see that something bright or brilliant
has shifted my morning praise.

Jessica Van Horsen
Winner of the F.R. Scott Award for Creative Writing

Creation Story
A huge turquoise ring, shiny like a beetle's back, or a turtle's.
A tiny lake, reflecting light in black lines, resting on a skinny brown finger.
The first turtle, floating in the ocean, holding the other animals on her back, trying to make land.
The finger goes through the ring, stretches, merges and makes itself into an old woman.
The hand that wears the ring holds a needle and its twin holds a cloth that slowly turns blue.
The needle dives and dives, like a kingfisher, into a bag of beads.
The needle holds the beads, lets them float down a thin white string and the hands care, wrap, stitch, tightly sewing them onto the cloth, creating the sky on a brand-new legging.
The ring moves, turquoise hovering over blue, carried by the old woman, who separates sky from water with earth.
Sarah Dowling

The Swan Pond
Majesty in a long white neck
Shapely eyes, shaped like the over-smooth bodies that glide and glide, dangerous in green water.
A floating fleet of dreadnought bread-eaters, propelling their boat-bodies toward me, mounting their attack on my regrettably unshod feet, trumpeting their war-cry for more bread.
Their pond is not a real one, not even old.
Green water encased in cement bricks, arches built to look like ruins, prepackaged decay.
Nature creeps in in the white plumage, but soon is seduced by the sweet taste of bread.
Blood bread. Hot little icicle teeth rake over my feet, speckling the white bread red.
The swans see that it drips down.
Blood oozing, falling, dyeing the dying bread crumbs, the war-weary croutons.
They sink, waterlogged, or are gobbled up by the gorgeous, gorge-ous armada in the civic park.
Sarah Dowling

Creation Story 2
A sweet taste in her mouth.
Stretched over an orange couch, reading.
Sharp little flecks of thought dance on her lips, her eyebrows and a thick strip of light from a small window lies across her.
One tiny ring jumps out, fragment of semi-preciousness, casting its reflection all over the wall, making stars in our house.
Sarah Dowling
Canadian Gothic
Mom and Dad
Twenty-eight years ago,
Wedding-time or thereabouts.
They stand squinting into the camera
The way everyone always did
Positioned in front of their home
Grinning widely, hip but quaint.
Matching shirts: “Property of State Prison”.
(Where are those shirts now?
I’d wear one.)
Her hair is waist-length, straight,
He, now bald, has a mess of curls.
Hard not to giggle.
There are exactly three twinkles in his eye
And he is holding her the way
he holds her now.

Amanda McCoy

in transit
Model houses
row on row.
We few
the coping
make this our own,
sprawling on short suburban grass
or laughing and loitering
in the garish lighting
of Tim Horton’s friendly windows.
Flocks of hi-tech workers
drive thru for coffee and bagel
and jog it off at lunch,
while their scrawny offspring
braying with angst
reel through parking lots,
daddy’s scotch
winced down their throats
burning in GAP-gilded guts.
Just a bustling rut
in which to talk and twist gently
on beloved dark piss-stained swings,
mangling disgust with fantasy
and dreaming quiet plans
under stars washed out by streetlamps.

Priya Raju

Home
The first human hand that planted the seed,
Waved our hunting fathers into the past,
And unchartered forests were soon to lead
To the fence, temple, and mariner’s mast.
The farmer who waved the last nomad good-bye,
Across the trackless European plain,
Had shelter in place of the open sky,
And a garden instead of untrod terrain.
And most importantly, it was the home
That eased the terrible perils of life,
That allowed him to ponder arch and dome
And to make safe every man’s child and wife.
A civilizing thing that gives us breath,
A place for forgetting both time and death.

Frank Willdig
On the Shore of Lake Ontario

I gaze upon the scene.
I stand on the shore and quietly wait, a visitor uninvited.
The stillness astounds me.
The stars wink from above.
No sounds on the lake but the occasional flap of ducks landing.
A flock sails in, and though I cannot see them, I hear their echoes across the water.
They watch me from a distance.
I can hear them laughing as they see I’ve discovered only now what they have known since they first broke free into this world:
The power of this place after midnight has gone and dawn has yet to arrive streaming glory.
Silence returns, and it is here that I leave them – ducks on the water at twilight time.
The fog makes me unsure that I ever really saw them.
My vision, unaccustomed to a total lack of light.

Jenn Kang

4 a.m. Patient

Quelled diagonal across the bed,
your body traced heavy
a residual rockface.
On the rosewood dresser
your passport
to lobster tails
lazy matinées
and cool white sheets
all packed into a 150 mL syringe.
Pools on the pillow’s lip
your breath yokes with mine
fog swaggerers in thru the doorway
the shutters are a metronome racket.

Emily Evans

Lines Composed on the Shores of the Massawippi
(sometime after September 11, 2001)

The World that surrounds us
Roars by to its own rhythms
Beyond our control,
Forever our destiny
To ignore the importance of War.

Shaded by groves of trees
Blanketed in the peace they bring,
The water churns to the beat
Of guitar and drums
As friendships flourish
In the November sun.

Gulls scavenging at water’s edge
Take message of freedom
As far as they can
Stretching across the ocean
Heard by absent friendly ears.

Fading light... a fading slumber
Of the worries and strife
In everyday life
Gone in raven’s flight
Swallowed by nature’s silence.

Through the “unknown remembered gate”
We are again together,
In the day’s last light
A moment’s respite
Drum and guitar; the only voice
Daring the end of war.

Stephen Campbell
Wherever

Two, wanting baby virgins cry for their naked fearful eyes
Into the golden-smooth pools of sin
Where songs of waters falling
Carve their art within the air
And a poet marks his words
For the opened-tears of day.
While the gods above
Of peace and war
Play with marbles in the sky
Raindrops fall down to lovers
Tied up close to breaths of sweets and sweat
And flames for haloes.
Crown their silent pains away.
Around them dance the fields
With flowers
Caged and unaware of
their marble-stoned good byes.
Just one last kiss
With whispers
Storms down curtains full of clouds.
Dripping
Precious pearls
Off the smoking fountains of their silky lips
Faces painted red with dawn and wind unfold
As the sinking sun still burns her orange shadows
Through her blazing autumn leaves
She still-colors every mountain.
“Stars alike of lighting wink, will wave the awesome seas to sleep
And black as dark as night can tame the blood of busy man
But only love, in love, will shine the jewels in space with wings,”
So chants the silver moon to all,
“All else can break and fall like broken treasures blown about
Through the empty tunnels of some mind
Where poets’ kisses are for all times free.”

Curtis Mullin

The Buskers

Roughly forty-eight people
hurting together
(or, at least, toward the same city)
face front of the bus.
I remember a giddy Vieux-port crowd,
merry elbow prodding for missed jokes,
calling and stomping and singing out loud
before I got on here.
A flustered mother
pats at a screaming mass of limbs
and looks around, apologizing silently
like a tired hunted animal.
An accomplished young man
offers his just-browsing-thanks kind of smile
and, having lost a staring contest
with the thread on his pants,
absently kneads his left temple against the window.
If someone belched good and loud
right now,
we’d all stiffen or shift expectantly
and incredulous eyes would meet
and dance
and jerk away.

Priya Raju

Swaying Across Town

His calls animate a match
near the seeping gas line
behind her eyes.
If not given the chance,
she would love him.
He always calls her, craving,
when she’s sleeping.
Conflicting irregular habits.
His heart is breaking,
the sky is falling,
he hasn’t slept in two days,
and she’s got endurance.

Jessica Van Horssen
The Yellow Wallpaper
The summer wind blows
Filmy curtains billow, recede
And so
As through lazily blinking eyes
Sun drips over yellow wallpaper
Here and there a vague pattern shows through
Under the glaze of sunlight
Pale rivulets, intertwining branches
Tangle and hide what might lie beneath the surface
Each holds a path that can be followed,
But is inevitably sliced away
At a corner or the window's edge
The intruding curtain shifts
Eyes blink
And there is nothing more than yellow wallpaper
Rose Morton

Untitled
A sumptuous blond dog prancing
in the wild, frozen grasses,
long and yellow.
Tiny bits of light announcing
the frost that lasts
right up till the evening
of an October day.
Stripy sky filtering
the sun that dyes
the world gold
all through the year
but makes it purple and yellow today.
Sarah Dowling

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim
Offspring of a spiraling funnel
Intense, polymorphic, unbreakable
Life exists in this architecture
Titanium scales reflect the fire unmediated by the broken ozone
womb
Glass gill absorb industrial filth and exhale fresh air for an entire generation.
Sensuous curves battle convention
Glass eyes
Windows of the soul
Offer glimpses of conception,
Prophecy,
Genetically superior, highly evolved entities
That subsist inside.
This Calculated child's play has resurrected
irreverent magic.
Nancy Morin

Debriefed
Petals:
My hand throbs in the heat
I wrap my pink hand around the stem
it slices chain
Saw.
Wipe dripping red on white dress now ruined
Crumple dress in heap in shrub
invisible.
Squeeze ripe skin around slash
reeling bloody zigzags all over my
Garden.
Emily Evans
Les Dessinateurs de L’air

(à Dominique Labauvie, sculpteur)

The difference between
he who turns iron bars into
strokes of brush or delicate loops
of pencil in the air and me
is, that he is seeking quintessence of
form through a battle with material
or through basic fusion, his process
is long, drawn out, and steps from
sketch to sketch to model to days of
work and rework.
I have the disadvantage of being
closer to tapping thought as it springs
direct and silent on the page straight from
my searching mind, pausing only
to select what image, what sound
I prefer to transmit my impression,
my idea.
And too I have no limit in time or space,
but I battle with sequence and logic
and grammar
and clarity of image. Seeking
that same quintessence in
another form,
we draw the same air.

Robert Hackett